



KEYS TO EFFECTIVE HEALTH PROMOTION



Key #7: Flexibility

Build flexibility into your health promotion plan.

Think ahead: what unexpected challenges might come up as you implement your program? How could you adapt and change the program to meet those challenges?

- **Consider the “what if’s?”**

- What if your classroom space is suddenly no longer available?
- What if you can’t hold the health fair in the usual place?
- Have a ‘Plan B’ (or even Plan C or Plan D) in mind for *when* the “what if’s” happen.

- **Build a team that can help**

- Who else could teach the health education class if the regular instructor cancels at the last minute?
- Know what areas of expertise MTF staff and line personnel have besides their ‘main’ job. For example, find out who has fitness instructor credentials besides just the physical therapist.
- Don’t wait for a crisis before you build a network of people that you can call on.

- **Be ready to roll your sleeves up**

- Jump in to fill a gap if you need to.
- YOU may have to help restock the milk case in the dining facility when the Dairy Month ‘Milk Mustache’ contest results in increased sales during lunch.

- **Be willing (and ready) to respond to feedback**

- Get participant feedback while the health promotion program is ongoing. Then be ready to adapt to those suggestions.
- For example, if kids in a pediatric obesity program fight the idea of completing exercise logs, then get a verbal summary of their activity for the week instead.

- **Simplify**

- If part of your program is not working, try making that part less complicated.
- For example, if getting follow-up information is not going the way you planned, then make the process to get information easier OR decrease the number of pieces of information that you collect.

- **Use lemons to make lemonade**

- What do you do when the program doesn’t turn out exactly as you planned? Look for what did turn out. Often, the ‘unexpected outcomes’ produce positive results.
- For example, one installation’s database to collect sick call data was made obsolete by a regional system. However, the installation database was able to be used in a different way to track vaccination information that improved delivery of care to Soldiers.
- At another installation, world events halted a new physical training program. Instead, program materials were made into a deployment fitness guide.